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## ORDINARY MEETING.\*

T. CHAPLIN, ESQ., M.D., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed, and the following Elections were announced :—

ASSOCIATES :—J. Caleb Jackson, Esq., M.D., United States ; Rev. J. H. Parry, B.A., Burma ; Rev. W. M. Teape, B.A., Durham ; Rev. S. M. Zwemer, M.A., Arabia.

The following paper was then read by the author :—

*BUDDHISM, AND "THE LIGHT OF ASIA."*†

By the Rev. R. COLLINS, M.A.

**I**N what sense, and how far, can Buddha be called "the Light of Asia"? In putting the question thus, I am by no means wishing to suggest that I am embarking on an attempt to prove that the teaching of Buddha was all darkness. That certainly is not my conviction: how could it be so in the face of many of the moral tenets that are to be read in the Buddhist books, as, for instance, that "the man who has sinful friends, unwise associates, and frequents the company of those who follow evil practices, will come to destruction, both in this world, and in the next"; that "it is right that children should respect their parents, and perform all kinds of offices for them"; and that they are even "to wash the feet and hands of their parents, thinking how they themselves were washed when they were young." Such are truly moral and noble precepts. But I demur at what manifestly tends to represent Buddha as "the Light of Asia" in regions beyond those to which his influence really belonged. And this is what I think is the tendency of Sir Edwin Arnold's

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\* 7th of 28th session.

† Discussion completed September, 1895.

beautiful poem, which he has written under that title. A poet is a creator; and no doubt he is at liberty to take any subject, and adorn it, or remodel it, as he wills, for the purposes of his art. The result becomes the creature of his own brain. And what we all most admire, probably, in a poem, is the evidence of the skill and poetical power of the thinker. Sir Edwin Arnold's poetry is admirable in that it is picturesque in a high degree; but I read *The Light of Asia* with this one feeling, that it is no more a picture of the genuine and real Buddha, than Alfred Tennyson's "King Arthur" is a picture of the actual King Arthur, if such King, indeed, ever existed. There is all the difference in the world between a portrait by Millais, and an Andromache by the President of the Royal Academy; between what may be called, in an "Art" sense—realism and idealism.

That Buddha really existed. I fully believe; but that he himself would have been deeply astonished, could he have foreseen the future picture to be drawn of him by the modern poet, I believe also. Sir Edwin Arnold, indeed, admits in his preface, that he has "modified more than one passage in the received narratives"; but yet he speaks of a "just conception" to be gathered from his poem, "of the lofty character of this noble prince (Buddha), and of the general purport of his doctrines"; and many will, no doubt, regard *The Light of Asia* as conveying a correct portrait of the real fundamental facts of Buddha's character and original teaching.

Our poet, for instance, as perhaps he has a right to do as a poet—though certainly not as an expounder of the real nature of a so-called religious system—takes the later legends as to Buddha's nature and work, as best fitted to his poetical dream, and opens his poem by a description of Buddha coming from the sky to be born again among men to "help the world." From the same sources, and from whencesoever there is a picturesque bit to be gleaned, he draws the picture of a human incarnation of a divine Buddha. A somewhat striking description is that of the aged recluse Asita worshipping the new-born infant.

"O Babe! I worship! Thou art He!  
 I see the rosy light, the foot-sole marks,  
 The soft curled tendril of the Swastika,  
 The sacred primal signs thirty and two,  
 The eighty lesser tokens. Thou art Buddh,  
 And thou wilt preach the Law and save all flesh  
 Who learn the Law, though I shall never hear,  
 Dying too soon, who lately longed to die;

Howbeit I have seen thee. Know, O King,  
 This is that blossom on our human tree  
 Which opens once in many myriad years,  
 But opened, fills the world with Wisdom's scent,  
 And Love's dropped honey; from thy royal root,  
 A Heavenly lotus springs. Ah, happy House!  
 Yet not all-happy, for a sword must pierce  
 Thy bowels for this boy."

This is pretty: but to the Christian reader it is too evidently illuminated, as also is the case not unfrequently in the rest of the poem, with rays of beauty gathered from another source, which rays first probably entered Sir Edwin Arnold's mind at his mother's knee.

The first mention of this visit of the aged devotee is in the Mahāvagga of the Sutta-Nipāta, where I think there are strong evidences of its being an interpolation. But the form of the narrative there is much more simple than in subsequent Buddhist writings, an example of which later description occurs in Spence Hardy's *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 147, which is taken, I believe, from the Pūjā-waliya, a book written in probably the thirteenth century of the Christian era. It is to such later accounts that Sir Edwin Arnold is apparently indebted for most of his imagery. But even to this he adds embellishments from the Christian story, as, for instance, in the expression "a sword must pierce thy bowels for this boy." It may be added that there is no evidence whatever, that therē was any Hindu expectancy, at the time of Buddha's birth, of such a "blossom on our human tree," as should "fill the earth with Wisdom's scent, and Love's dropped honey," and "save all flesh."

Buddha himself, according to the earlier records, made no claim to be divine, or, indeed, to be anything more than a human teacher of a new path towards reaching peace of mind, and deliverance from the ills of life. He was a religious revolutionist in respect to religious methods.

With regard to the nature of our authorities, the literature of Buddhism is very extensive; and consists of books written at many different times. We cannot, of course, base the original history of Buddhism on the later books. There are also different phases of Buddhism in different countries; the religion, if it is to be so called, having received many modifications in Thibet, China, Burmah, and Japan; sometimes to the almost absolute subversion of its original character. The statement of Sir Edwin Arnold, therefore, in his preface to *The Light of Asia*, that "Four hundred and seventy millions

of our race live and die in the tenets of Gautama," must be taken with considerable qualifications. For instance the great mass of the Chinese, though commonly ranked amongst Buddhists, neither live nor die in the tenets of ancient Buddhism. (See Professor Legge's *Religions of China*.)

It is only in the most ancient sources that we can hope to reach the original tenets of Buddhism, and these are to be found, as I think also all scholars allow, in certain of the Ceylon books. Even the most ancient writings, however, do not reach, by any means, up to Buddha's time; and it is impossible to say how far they may have embedded previously existing manuscripts. Of this, however, we are certain, that for some time the tenets of the order were handed down from mouth to mouth, as is more than once stated in the books we have,\* not, perhaps, because they could not write in those days (we have now learned that the art of writing is as old, at least, as the early Accadians, and was common among them); but for the sake of secrecy, as well, no doubt, as to give a certain dignity to what was taught, a custom that has always obtained in India, and is even to this day adopted in certain cases in our own island. There has been, no doubt, abundance of room and opportunity for additions and changes by speculative Buddhist writers, as time has passed on. We can, in fact, only separate the old from the new by the application of internal evidences, supported indeed to some extent, and it is to be hoped still further to be supported, or corrected, some day, much more at large, by external evidences furnished by antiquarian research in the North and perhaps other parts of India.

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\* The original mode of keeping up the traditions was by question and answer: see the account of the Council of Rājagaha in the eleventh Khandhaka of the Chullavagga; this Council is said to have taken place immediately after Buddha's death. The same plan was adopted a hundred years after at the Council of Vesāli, where "the brother Revata" was brought forward, as "wise in the traditions," and "knowing by heart the Dhamma and the Vinaya" (*Chullavagga*, xii, 1, 10). Further, we are told in the *Dīpavamsa*, that in Ceylon in the reign of Vattagāmani, who is supposed to have lived about 400 years after the death of Buddha, the traditions as known in that Island were first put into writing: "Before this time the wise Bhikkhus had orally handed down the text of the three Pitakas and also the *Atthakathā*. At this time the Bhikkhus, who perceived the decay of created beings, assembled, and in order that the Religion might endure for a long time, they recorded (the texts) in written books." (*Dīpavamsa* xx, 20, 21.) It is, of course, possible that there had already been privately written memoranda.

There is nothing in what are evidently the earliest accounts to distinguish Buddha from other ascetics, of whom there were many, beyond the character of the new doctrine that he taught. The account of his royal birth, which we meet with, as we descend the stream of Buddhist literature, may or may not be true. I think there is no hint of it in the Mahāvagga of the Vinaya Pitaka, where his early ascetic history is recorded. Indeed in the Mahāvagga of the Sutta Nipāta he is in one place represented as saying, "No Brahmana am I, nor a king's son, nor any Vessa; having thoroughly observed the class of common people, I wander about the world reflectingly, possessing nothing." (*Sutta Nipāta*, v, 454.) This is in reply to a Brahman, who had asked him, "Of what family art thou?" It is, of course, possible that he might merely wish to ignore a royal descent before a proud and haughty high-caste man, and now only rank himself as a man among men. In either case he bears witness of, and bases his worthiness upon, the fact of his being "Calm, without anger, free from pain, free from desire, one with a good understanding;" and says further, "Do not ask about descent, but ask about conduct: from wood, it is true, fire is born: likewise a firm Muni (*i.e.*, a sage or religious saint), although belonging to a low family, may become noble, when restrained from sinning by humility." Here, as it seems to me, he lays down the first principles that had influenced his own mind. He further describes himself as being "subdued by truth;" "endowed with temperance;" "leaving sensual pleasures;" "whose passions are gone;" "one who is just with the just, and far from the unjust"—sentiments which occur over and over again in the Buddhist accounts of his conversations. (*Sutta Nipāta*, 462-468.)

What Buddha himself really was, and what we are to understand as his own original method of teaching, can only be gathered from the earliest accounts. Perhaps our best first authority is the Mahāvagga of the Vinaya Pitaka; not that it is altogether free in its present form from legendary matter, but because it, no doubt, contains some of the earliest traditions extant as to his original doctrines. Buddha's starting point seems to have been from the conviction of "ignorance:" the world was ignorant, the Brahmans were ignorant, he himself had been ignorant, of the right way. This is a natural starting point for every new teacher. But his own ignorance, he is reported to have said, had

passed away under long meditation; and the real nature of things became clear to his ardent gaze. It is true that this doctrine of "ignorance" assumed, perhaps, rather ultimately than from the first, a decidedly metaphysical aspect in the Buddhist teaching, not always easily grasped: but we can have no hesitation in understanding the first practical result of Buddha's new vision of the problem of human life; it was, as he early taught the five Brahman monks at Benares, that "there are two extremes, which he who has given up the world ought to avoid, viz., a life given to pleasures, devoted to pleasures and lusts, which is degrading, sensual, vulgar, ignoble, and profitless: and a life given to mortification, which is painful, ignoble, and profitless. By avoiding," he says, "these two extremes, the Tathāgata (*i.e.*, himself the Buddha) has gained the knowledge of the Middle Path, which leads to insight, which leads to wisdom, which conduces to calm, to knowledge, to the Sambodhi (that is, perfect knowledge, or Buddhahood), to Nirvāna." He then goes on to ask, "Which is this Middle Path, the knowledge of which the Tathāgata has gained? It is the holy eight-fold path, namely, Right Belief, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right means of Livelihood, Right Endeavour, Right Memory, Right Meditation (*Mahāvagga*, 17, 18). He condemns on the one hand, the worldly, selfish, unholy life; and, on the other, the life of religious ritualism that existing devotees and ascetics were engaged in, and on which he himself had once entered; and takes a new, and, as it is here called, a Middle Path, toward the attainment of spiritual emancipation, as he understood it. This Middle Path is remarkable; and is of a totally different character from the line of religious duties laid down in any previous Hindu writings that I have seen. The Upanishads, for instance, are occupied with numerous sacrificial details and theories,\* and most abstruse meditations as to the great

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\* It seems to be sometimes overlooked that the ancient Hindu sacrificial system underlies the whole of the teaching of the Upanishads; (*e.g.*) the first disquisition on the syllable "Om" in the Chāndogya-Upanishad, i, 1, is towards the perfecting of the sacrificial rites. The same is the case as to other meditations: (*cf.* *Chāndogya-Up.* i, 5, 5; i, 11; ii, 23; ii, 24; iii, 17; iv, 16; &c.). "Let a man make him, who knows this (teaching) his Brahman priest (*i.e.*, for the purpose of offering sacrifice), not one who does not know it." (*Chānd.* iv, 17, 9). See also *Āitareya-ūranayaka* ii, 3, 3; ii, 3, 4, &c.; and *Kaushītaki-Up.* ii, 3, 7, 8, &c.

Spirit of the Universe, and his relation to human things, but containing comparatively few references to moral truths. The Yogis no doubt then practised, as they still practise, certain bodily austerities; this manner of religious life Buddha defines under the one word "mortifications," which, he says, are "painful, ignoble, and profitless." But his own system was new and very different. Instead of the many religious external observances he would have Right Action in a moral sense. This I believe to have been, as I have already said, his first thought. And the revolution from a rule of ritual to a rule of conduct we can well understand to have been enormous.

Buddha, then, was a reforming ascetic amongst the many ascetics of his day, and further than this we can hardly go with anything like a feeling of certainty. That there may be a substratum of truth in the later accounts of his being a king's son; his youthful dismay at the first sight of old age, disease, and death; his forsaking of his young wife and child; is no doubt quite possible; but that wonderful history of his early years, so often quoted and admired, that "Great Renunciation," as it has been called, had better be regarded always, perhaps, as part of the "*Romantic History*" of Buddha. It is quite worth mentioning, in this connection, that a portion of that "Romantic" early history is found in the *Mahāvagga* of the *Vinaya Pitaka*, where it belongs to the history, not of Buddha, but of a noble youth of Benares, Yasa by name, who joined Buddha early in his career. I refer to the scene of the sleeping female musicians in the palace, the sight of whom is said to have reminded him of a cemetery of the dead. In this way embellishments were heaped upon the founder of Buddhism by zealous, and not always very truth-loving, devotees, as years passed on, at least one of which was stripped from the shoulders of even one of his own disciples.

We must now come to a more interesting, as well as more difficult part of Buddhistic teaching. What was to be the end of this new mode of religious life, which replaced the ancient Hindu systems of religious austerities, ritual, and resultless meditations, by the rule of personal conduct? And what suggested to Buddha this, to the then world of India, entirely new method of reaching peace of mind, and freedom from human ills? To take the last question first—the reply to it is by no means easy. But I cannot trace his method to any sufficient *data* in the then existing, or any

previous Hindu teachings, that have been handed down to us in writing. Sir Monier Williams has said, that "The close relationship of Buddhism to the Yoga system is well known"; and it has been stated by very scholarly persons, that Buddhism is merely a development of that system; some also have claimed the previous Sankhya system as containing the seeds of Buddha's teaching. But though Buddha no doubt began life as a Yogin with the accustomed rites, austerities, and meditations, yet, whatever the first bent of his meditations, he was ultimately forced, as we have seen, upon an entirely new path, the regulation of human conduct. I cannot resist the conviction that this new path came to him from without; though I am prepared to admit, that it is not an impossibility, that it may have grown out of traditions of moral truth, which, though not prominent in the Hindu sacred books, belonging, as they did, to an age when religious ritualism and mysticism had well nigh stamped out all other religious objects, yet no doubt still existed in the popular conscience. I cannot now discuss the question of external influences bearing on Buddha's teaching, beyond noting the extreme interest of the subject, and observing that there was at and before the time of Buddha—whose death, at the age of eighty, Professor Max Müller places at 447 B.C.—a centre of light in the lives and protests of certain of God's own people in the north, and even in the decrees of some heathen princes, against the wide influence of which there is no, even presumptive, evidence; and that, however sceptical many may be as to the possibility of Jewish light reaching North India, it is allowed by competent scholars, that in and after Alexander's time, Grecian art, at least, had power not only to reach, but materially to modify, Buddhist art on the Indian frontier; and that in later times it is undoubted that Christian missionaries and others, who have penetrated central Asia, have left traces of their methods among the Buddhists of Thibet. We cannot, therefore, too hastily put aside the possibility, at least, of still earlier influences from without, as regards religious and moral thought.

We now come to ask, what was to be the end, the goal, the ultimate purpose, of this new path of method in religion? To what was the rectitude of life to lead? In the study of this subject, we shall find ourselves often surrounded by many most perplexing, recondite, questions in Buddhist doctrine. As we try to reach the real goal, even the path

itself begins to be tortuous, and sometimes we find ourselves in quite a labyrinth of difficulties. But we must bear in mind that the first direction, and apparently main direction, we find to be on the lines of moral conduct. However much the path seems to turn out of the way towards the wilderness farther ahead, its first start, even viewed from a Christian stand-point, is straight. I may here add to what I have said above, that the rock inscriptions of North India, belonging, it is believed, to the time of Asōka, the great royal patron of Buddhism in the third century, B.C., favour the idea, that Buddhism, even in that early age, was chiefly remarkable for its simple morality. There may still be found on, I believe, more than one monument in North India, the verse thus translated by Professor Rhys Davids—

"To cease from all sin,  
To get virtue,  
To cleanse one's own heart,  
This is the religion of the Buddhas."

(*Dhammapada*, 183).

This sentiment must have been at the time one, at least, of the fundamental positions of Buddhist teaching.

But when we go to the Buddhist books, even the most ancient ones, we find the end of the holiness preached not, we think, always sufficiently exalted to terminate so beautiful a road. We may, perhaps, be sometimes more or less blinded by our own ideas of what ought to be. We must, no doubt, try, so far as we can, to surround ourselves with the religious atmosphere in which Buddha lived, that we may fully understand him; and we can understand something of the Hindu religion as practised by the Brahmans from our knowledge of the India of to-day, that which Buddha speaks of under the general term "mortifications." We also clearly discern, that Buddha's age must have been one of great licentiousness, pride, and worldliness, as well as consequent misery to thousands. In one respect we can understand the end of his method of life; it is "emancipation from suffering"; it is "freedom from vice"; it is "peace"; it is sometimes named "immortality," and the "immortal place" (*Dhammapada* 21, 114). But as we study the books, we find that the immortal end, named Nirvāna (in Pāli, Nibbāna) is, in fact, often described as a mere deliverance from Metempsychosis, or re-birth. This seems to be an altogether insufficient goal to inspire so arduous a race; and then, as we still further consider the path along

which Nirvāna is to be reached, we find that it is not merely, after all, by a rightly regulated life, but by absolute destruction of desire, lust, clinging to existence; by the "noble truth," in words put into the mouth of Buddha, "of the cessation of suffering, which ceases with the complete cessation of the thirst that leads to re-birth, a cessation which consists in the absence of every passion—with the abandoning of this thirst, with the doing away with it, with the deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire" (*Mahāvagga*, i, 6, 21). To reach this, the devotee must pass through experiences, and reach results, which, to say the least, are, in practice, impossible to human nature. Now, this superhuman power of effort, discipline, and result is frequently described as earning merely the extinction of the doom of re-birth. Thus in the *Mahāvagga*, where probably we have as ancient a record as any of the conversations of Buddha, he is made to say, "A learned, noble hearer of the word becomes weary of body, weary of sensation, weary of perception, weary of the Sankhāras (*i.e.*, the elements and properties of bodily existence), weary of consciousness. Becoming weary of all that, he divests himself of passion; by absence of passion he is made free; when he is free, he becomes aware that he is free; and he realises that re-birth is exhausted; that holiness is completed; that duty is fulfilled; and that there is no further return to this world" (*Mahāvagga*, i, 6, 46). He also says of himself, "This knowledge and insight arose in my mind, the emancipation of my mind cannot be lost, this is my last birth, hence I shall not be born again." And similarly in very many other passages. This doctrine of the re-birth had long been held in India. Thus one of the Upanishads says, "Those whose conduct has been good will quickly attain some good birth, the birth of a Brahman, or a Kshatriya, or a Vaisya. But those whose conduct has been evil, will quickly attain evil birth, the birth of a dog, or a hog, or a Chandāla." (*Chāndogya Upanishad*, v, 10, 7.) This was the doctrine as to the future, which held the popular mind, when Buddha was born. Could it have been only against this prospect of future birth that Buddha strove? Should the merit gained by a moral life, and the absolute destruction of the passions, secure an immunity from the doom of re-birth, what then? What lay beyond? This question could not escape, or appear of inferior moment to, the acute mind of a Hindu, such as Buddha.

Yet in all the Buddhist books we have no clear idea of the hereafter of the true disciple. That hereafter was, of course, Nirvāna. But what was the Nirvāna? It is spoken of under many different aspects, not merely as an emancipation from the doom of re-birth, but as the extinction of suffering, as bliss, as immortality. Certainly it never meant in Buddha's mouth annihilation of being, though it may have meant annihilation of the process of re-births. But it is by no means certain that it originally meant annihilation in any sense. It is true that the idea of annihilation of existence had been discussed quite early in the history of Buddhism; but this is what Buddha himself is reported to have said about it, "In which way is it, that one speaking truly could say of me 'The Samana Gotama maintains annihilation, and in this doctrine he trains his disciples?' I proclaim the annihilation of lust, of ill-will, of delusion; I proclaim the annihilation of the manifold conditions of heart, which are evil and not good" (*Mahāvagga*, vi, 31, 7). The fact seems to be that much of Buddha's teaching was often misunderstood and misapplied; and the result probably appears in even the most ancient of the Buddhist writings, in those intricate and perplexing statements as to causation and existence, the nature of the self, and the nature of the world. We are forced upon the question as to whether we find in many of the more puzzling passages in even the most authentic and ancient books, the actual original teachings of Buddha, or the results of a mystical Buddhism, that may have arisen much in the same way that Christian mysticism arose in the Middle Ages? The character of mysticism indicates that it is everywhere, to a great degree, if not entirely, the result of various natural tendencies of the human mind, especially the tendency to magnify the importance and extent of particular lines of thought, until they are forced out of due proportion to the other parts of the system to which they belong, and so throw the whole machinery out of gear, thus frustrating its real functions. The perplexities of Buddhist ontology naturally raise the very important question as to whether they all had their origin in Buddha's own mind, or in the minds of his many biographers and commentators. The consciousness of the difficulty of explaining many of the Buddhist propositions that are laid down in the books was evidently experienced by the writers themselves. Thus the writer of the *Mahāvagga* describes one of Buddha's early meditations in these

words, "I have penetrated this doctrine which is profound, difficult to perceive, and to understand, which brings quietude of heart, which is exalted, which is unattainable by reasoning, abstruse, intelligible only to the wise. This people, on the other hand, is given to desire, intent upon desire, delighting in desire. To this people, therefore, who are given to desire, intent upon desire, delighting in desire, the law of causality, and the chain of causation will be a matter difficult to understand; most difficult for them to understand will be also the extinction of all Sankhāras (*i.e.*, all environments of the self), the getting rid of all the substrata (of existence), the destruction of desire, the absence of passion, quietude of heart, Nirvāna!" (Mahāvagga i, 5, 2.) Did all these mysterious doctrines arise in the one mind of Gotama? Or did they arise in the discussion of his teaching by those who came after? I incline to the latter supposition, chiefly on the ground that the goal which Buddha desired to reach after this life, and which is called Nirvāna, is spoken of under so many different attributes, all sharing the idea simply of emancipation from the ills, present and anticipative, of existence; the actual path to which is evidently a moral, well regulated, life on earth. An actual definition of Nirvāna is nowhere found. Perhaps in ignorance of its real character Buddha avoided any attempt at definition. But it is not annihilation of existence, nor can it be merely deliverance from the doom of re-birth, although that deliverance is so often dwelt upon. Was it not, that this doctrine of the transmigration of souls was just the popular view of the future, that must first give way before a truer light? The mere prospect of successive changes of existence was not the real terror to be met, but the possible condition of such existence. We find descriptions in the Buddhist books of what amounts to endless life in hell and physical torments. In the Mahāvagga of the Sutta Nipāta we find the question, "How long is the rate of life, O venerable one, in the Paduma hell?" To which Buddha replies, "Long, O Bhikkhu, is the rate of life in the Paduma hell, it is not easy to calculate either by saying so many years or so many hundreds of years or so many thousands of years or so many hundred thousands of years." He then gives an illustration of the length of time in this hell, by supposing one sesamum seed to be taken from an immense heap after the lapse of every hundred years; the heap he says, would in this way sooner dwindle

away and be used up, than one Abbuda hell; and as the time passed in the Paduma hell is almost infinitely greater than the time passed in the Abbuda hell, the duration of such a state of existence is at least very considerable (*Sutta Nipāta*, M. 10.) The antithesis to this is, of course, Nirvāna. If Buddha really taught that hell was almost endlessly prolonged existence, why should he have taught that Nirvāna was a state of unconsciousness, or a negation of being? The fact is Nirvāna is rather spoken of as a state of perfect existence; what is put off, or annihilated, is the earthly body and the earthly state. We may take a few examples:—“Earnestness is the path of immortality (*amrita*); thoughtlessness, the path of death. Those who are earnest do not die; those who are thoughtless are as if dead already” (*Dhammapada*, 21). “Rouse thyself! do not be idle! Follow the law of virtue! The virtuous rests in bliss in this world and in the next” (*Dham.*, 168). “This world is dark, few only can see here; a few only go to heaven, like birds escaped from the net” (*Dham.*, 174). “The Bhikkhu, full of delight, who is calm in the doctrine of Buddha, will reach the quiet place; cessation of natural desires and happiness” (*Dham.*, 381). “Him I call indeed a Brāhmana who has traversed this miry road, the impassable world and its vanity, who has gone through, and reached the other shore” (*Dham.*, 414). “Such a Bhikkhu who has turned away from desire and attachment, and is possessed of understanding in this world, has gone to the immortal peace, the unchangeable state of Nibbāna” (*Uragavagga*, 203). These passages are taken almost at haphazard, chiefly from one book; and in them we find the Nirvāna described as “immortality,” an escape from death, “rest in bliss” in the next world, “heaven,” “the quiet place,” “the other shore,” “the immortal peace.” There is no idea of the cessation of existence, except earthly existence. And nowhere, so far as I know, is Nirvāna represented as a sleep or a state of unconsciousness. The end of Buddha’s original teaching was evidently emancipation from the evils of existence, and his method of obtaining that end was a purified and moral life. Whatever was added to those simple elements was added, I suspect, in what we perhaps, might venture to call the Spencerian phases of subsequent Buddhist philosophy.

The late Professor Childers, in his *Pāli Dictionary*, in a dissertation on Nibbāna, adduced a number of passages to sup-

port an idea that "Nirvāna is a brief period of bliss (of course in this life) followed by eternal death." The argument is undoubtedly clever and learned. But I do not think that any of the passages produced are conclusive on his side of the question. For instance, in those very remarkable verses 153 and 154 of the *Dhammapada*, where Professor Childers translated, "my soul, arrived at the gates of annihilation (*visankhāra*), has attained the destruction of human passion," Professor Max Müller translates, "the mind approaching the Eternal (*visankhāra*), has attained to the extinction of all desires." Again, in *Dhammapada*, 203, where Professor Childers translates, "Hunger is the worst disease, existence is the worst suffering, to him who realises this truth extinction is the highest bliss," Professor Max Müller translates, "Hunger is the worst of diseases, the body the greatest of pains; if one knows this truly, that is Nirvāna, the highest happiness." In not a few other passages Professor Childers has introduced the idea of annihilation of being, where the original does not appear to demand it, as notably in his rendering of *Dh.* 368, the meaning of which he gives thus:—"The man who lives in charity with all, rejoicing in the commandment of Buddha, will attain the tranquil blessed lot which is the cessation of existence." The same passage is, in Professor Max Müller's rendering:—"The Bhikshu who acts with kindness, who is calm in the doctrine of Buddha, will reach the quiet place (Nirvāna), cessation of natural desires, and happiness." In none of these passages is annihilation of existence necessarily implied as the only real idea of Nirvāna. I am strongly of opinion that Professor Max Müller's explanation of the "apparent co-existence of two irreconcilable doctrines of Nirvāna," is the correct one, viz., that "the two opposite sets of expressions represent two phases of the doctrine, the one ancient and the other modern; of these the original doctrine taught by Buddha is that of 'the entrance of the soul into rest,' while the dogma of annihilation is a perversion introduced by metaphysicians in later times" (Childers' *Dict. under Nibbānam*). Indeed, I have shown above, that Buddha himself seems, at any rate, in words attributed to him, to deny that he taught annihilation of existence.

The exact application of the many terms used in the Buddhist ontology, as understood by the men of Buddha's own age, is by no means easy of apprehension. Thus in one of the examples given above, the comparatively common word *Sankhāra*, which is the same as the Sanscrit *Samskāra*, is

by Professor Max Müller translated "body," and by Professor Childers "existence," in of course a much wider sense. No doubt Buddha used Hindu philosophical terms in the sense in which they were then understood. Even, however, as used by the Brāhmins, these terms are not always very easily apprehended by us, even when assisted by the most learned Pandits. And when we come to try to fathom their real application in later Buddhist writings, we may not unfrequently come to wrong conclusions. He, for instance, who hopes to reach the actual teaching of Buddha himself through the study of the "*Milinda Prasna*" may easily arrive at conclusions very wide of the truth.

One very remarkable word finds its way into what are undoubtedly early sayings in the *Mahāvagga*. I refer to the word attā, Sanscrit ātman. It is used in *Mahāvagga* i, 6, 38, &c., to express the "self," "The body (rūpa) is not the self (attā)." What was understood in Buddha's day by attā, or ātman? and why did he use the word? This word was used by the Brāhmins to denote the self of the Infinite one, the Deity, and the self of man. In its use it was exactly analogous to the Hebrew *ruach* and the Greek *pneuma*. For the human ātman, after a purified life, Buddha promises eternal rest and happiness. He nowhere, so far as indicated by the writings we have, defines either the condition of this Nirvāna, or anything about the self, beyond postulating its existence. But he uses a word, which by the Brāhmins of his days meant an objective reality, the spirit of man, an undying personality. There is nothing to show that Buddha himself held the doctrine of the *non-ego*: but much to indicate that that doctrine was developed afterwards in the course of Buddhist argument.

The fact is, we can say nothing with certainty as to the actual teaching of Buddha himself beyond this,—that he taught the value of a purified life, and pointed to a better hope for the future, than the miserable outlook of Metempsychosis. In this respect he may be said, in a very important sense, to have been "the Light of Asia"; but we find in his teaching, as handed down to us, no evidence that he disclosed a "power that makes for righteousness" outside the mind of man, without a belief in which there can be no religion properly so called. The only cause, or power, disclosed as working towards the Nirvāna, was the destruction, by man's own wisdom and efforts, of sin and attachment to this worldly state; a common enough human belief. This primary

teaching was probably only afterwards philosophised into something that destroyed another supposed cause of the changes from one state of existence to another, held by the believers in metempsychosis, a cause which they called *Kamma*, or *Karma*, which is merely an abstract idea of the effects of merit and demerit.

In short, Buddha taught only the value of perfection in the moral life, which, however good in itself, is in truth always non-existent, except under a power higher than man's; a fact that the earlier Brāhman writers admitted. There being no revelation of such power in Buddhism, it cannot be with justice ranked as a religion. Therefore Buddhism has but little interest for the student of what has been called the Science of Religion, since it contains nothing of what is the essence of a religion, namely, an acknowledgment of a power above man's. Buddhism is founded upon a mere wreck of a traditional religion, that side only of religion which prescribes correct conduct.

In this view of Buddha's teaching, the efforts of some German writers to trace parallels between the histories of Buddha and of Jesus Christ are futile: for this reason, many of the legends of Buddha's life have entered the Buddhist accounts we know not how or when. We can only trace up to Buddha those methods on which he taught his band of ascetics after he himself had become an ascetic. He claims to have reached his conclusions himself. He certainly claims no divine power. The various legends of his divine birth; the adoration of *Asita* (of which there are several different versions); the temptation by *Māra*; the homage paid to him by various divine beings; his miracles; are entirely inconsistent with the real history of Buddha himself. They appear only, for the most part, in later books, some of them written probably hundreds of years after his death. The incidents in the life of Jesus Christ, on the contrary, are contained in accounts, of the historical character of which we have the most conclusive evidence. If we are to compare Buddhism with Christianity, so as to do justice to both, we must take only the undoubted teachings of Buddha, and the undoubted teachings of Jesus Christ—only thus will our conclusions be of any value. The legendary accounts of what may be called the superhuman side of Buddha's history, which have been at such length compared by Seydel and others with the facts of the life of Christ, cannot be shown to be necessary parts of the actual history of Buddha's mission.

Lastly, Buddha himself does not appear to have taught his followers any of those wonderful doctrines that are now disseminated under the names of Theosophy and Occultism. The mysteries of levitation; of passing solid bodies through stone walls; of spiriting written documents by unseen hands from one place to another; of apparitions and materializations of astral bodies; and other wonder-workings, are not found in the accounts of Buddha's early teaching. It is true that there are some wonderful powers attributed to Buddha in the later accounts of his doings; such as his rising up in the air and remaining seated there; his going into the Brahma-lōka (*i.e.*, heaven) to teach one of its inhabitants, who thereupon became a Buddhist; his omniscience; his eluding human measurement, on account of his being really of immeasurable height, though in ordinary appearance he was only like other men. But absurdities of this kind are not found either in the original teachings of Buddha or even in the earliest of other Hindu writings. Buddha did not spirit his epistles through the air to distant parts of the earth, or astonish his monks by causing plants to grow from seed, and clothe themselves with leaves and flowers in ten minutes; nor did he expound the mysteries of astral bodies; nor did he need darkness, with an occasional flash of gas or electricity, for the perfect teaching of his esoteric doctrines. And it is much to be desired that the Buddhists of Ceylon and other places would consider that there is no real relationship between modern Theosophy and ancient Buddhism. The Theosophists may have borrowed some ideas from *later* Hindu and Buddhist *mythology*; but they are only such ideas as have grown up everywhere in ages of ignorance, under a speculative and, what we may perhaps call, mythic spirit; as when someone magnified the scene on Christ's resurrection morning by picturing Him as conducted from the sepulchre by two angels, whose heads were in the clouds, while the head of Christ Himself, who was between them, was out of sight up in the heavens.

If the present age is going to develop, as it seems to be rapidly developing, mythology, we shall probably soon have Madame Blavatsky canonized, and regarded, or even perhaps worshipped, as an omniscient Saviour of the human race, a kind of goddess-Buddha.

It is astonishing, after the disclosures that were made in Madras a few years ago, to find educated men still believing in the mysterious powers of "Koot Hoomi" and the Hima-

layan mahatmas; and to find them still followers of such men as Colonel Olcott, whom the too clever Blavatsky evidently, to judge by her language, regarded as one of her "*familiar muffs*." When gigantic impositions like Theosophy and Occultism can sway men, who are supposed to be educated, in this boasted nineteenth century, as they seem to be swaying Paris, for instance; it does seem as if our public schools and other educational bodies should look to their laurels. It is not many months since the chairman of a school board, in one of the largest towns in Yorkshire, presided at a lecture given by one of the most prominent of the expounders of Theosophy and Occultism.

But these modern pretensions are no development of, nor have they their origin in, ancient Buddhism.

The CHAIRMAN (Dr. T. CHAPLIN):—The applause which has followed the reading of this paper is an indication of the readiness with which you will join in a very warm vote of thanks to the Author.\* For myself, I feel bound to say that I have never read and never listened to a more interesting paper upon this most important subject, and I venture to express the hope that those members and visitors who are present will favour the meeting with their views upon it.

Rev. G. U. POPE, D.D.—It has been a great pleasure to me to listen to the words of one whom I claim as an old friend and, in one sense, an old colleague, and, if I say anything at all it should be in the sense of supplementing from my South Indian experiences and studies the paper we have listened to. I do not wish for one moment to represent myself as knowing anything special about the original documents of Buddhism. I leave the consideration of that

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\* The Rev. R. Collins, M.A., was the selected author, in 1882, of the Institute's essay on Christianity and Buddhism which was discussed by several authorities at a meeting in 1884 (see vol. xviii). An able text book on the subject was the result, which was stereotyped and circulated in both hemispheres. The wide notice accorded to it, and to the Institute's action, by the press in the Colonies and America, had beneficial results, certain foreign correspondents reporting that the active propaganda of false views on the subject being carried on had been checked, and in some places abandoned.—ED.

part of the subject entirely on one side; but there is another part of it that I have been brought into contact with, for, I may say, fifty years, and that is the practical idea of Buddhism in the south of India. It is very curious that Buddhism at one time swayed almost the whole Tamil country. It had absolute possession of the minds of the foremost race of India, for the Tamil people may, intellectually, be called so, and are the most progressive. Buddhism had complete command over them. The evidence of this is quite clear from the travels of the Chinese monks, the remnants of their old buildings, and many other circumstances. But, at last Buddhism died out so utterly that now there is scarcely a single vestige of it, and one naturally asks what destroyed the influence of Buddhism in the south? There was another system—the Jain system which still survives, but the Jains were persecuted, hundreds of them were impaled, and the system was stamped out by horrors almost as great as those of the Inquisition. Buddhism was never persecuted in South India. There is no trace of any persecution of Buddhism, as distinguished from Jainism, at all; so that it did not lose its influence owing to persecution. The turning point of Buddhist history was somewhere about the ninth and tenth centuries—I am not quite certain of the date—but it was in the time of a very great man, Mānikka-Vāçagar, an illustrious historic personage—one whose whole history lies before us—a man who was a mixture of St. Paul, and of St. Francis of Assisi. Of course, I do not mean to say that Mānikka-Vāçagar taught the whole truth, certainly not, but the spirit of the man was such that he renounced everything to follow his convictions. He dated his conversion to his God from a certain hour, and from the fact that from that hour he was a new man. I think I may say that he lived very much the life of St. Paul to the end. A greater man, outside Christianity, than this sage, I believe never existed. He was the great reviver of the Çaiva system, and is called in their writings, the "Hammer" of the Buddhists. He went over to Ceylon, and there saw the king, preached Çaivism, was very ill-treated by the Buddhist monks, and then went home. The Buddhist monks said, "This man has come amongst us in this fanatical way, we shall have others coming. We will go to Cithambaram," and so a body of them went over the sea to the great Çaiva shrine, and established themselves there as a colony.

The king of Ceylon had a daughter who was dumb, and the king said, "I will take my dumb daughter to Mānikka-Vāçagar,

and, if he can restore her speech I will become a Çaivite, and if he cannot do it I will remain firm in my old faith." I suppose so much is historical. Then came the controversy. I do not mean to say that every word of it is historical; but it shows pretty exactly what the feeling of the south was with regard to Buddhism, and why it had lost its influence over them. In the controversy which was very fierce and prolonged, first of all the Çaivite disputant says to them, "You have no souls, you have no God, you have no real Nirvana. How is that? First of all you say that there are five grades, or sheaths, the secret of all existence. There is then no substratum of being. Certainly you teach that as long as we live we have souls and consciousness, but consciousness itself is only the fifth degree of existence, and that is a sheath round the supposed ego. The passing away of these sheaths, one by one, leaves at death nothing, because there is nothing at the core of it, no *substratum* of existence. The Buddhist system has no real objective soul at all." The Buddhists were obliged to concede this, that on the death of organisms all these sheaths were stripped away from them, the last being consciousness, and when consciousness was gone, where was the ego? The next argument was, "this being the case you have no deliverance from sin. The only deliverance there can be is the destruction of consciousness when you sink into nonentity; and you have no God, because all this applies, in your books, to your Buddha. He himself, has only an earthly body, which was the result of these five characteristics, that passed away when he died, and consciousness is the last of them. So your God exists not, you have neither God nor soul, nor can you have deliverance." There seemed no way to answer this, and the whole mass of the people and the king, and all the rest of the Buddhists that had come in embraced the Çaiva system, on the ground that Buddhism gave them no assurance of the existence of the soul, or any conscious state of blessedness or rest after this visible phenomenon of existence had passed away. The consequence was that Buddhism died out in South India from that very time. I do not say that this is an exactly fair view of Buddhism, but it is the view taken of it by the southern part of India, and it was the fact that Buddhism lost its influence in consequence.

Another thing I should like to mention cursorily is this. The Çaiva people were challenged by the others in this way. "Well,

what is your soul, what is your God, what is your deliverance, you say we have none of these, what have you?" And in reply they said, "All souls are eternal as God is eternal. An eternal soul is sheathed in ignorance as in death, but no human effort can illuminate that darkness. From God there must proceed the Divine illumination. The light from Him must come into the human soul, or it never can see the light. You have no illuminating beam that can proceed from that nonentity of a Buddhist God, and it is clear that, according to Buddhism, your dead are gone to nothingness and passed away; but from our system comes the pure light, and raises the soul to Çaiva." There is one more thing, "We believe," they said, "in a conscious immortality. The souls of holy emancipated men become, as it were, satellites moving round a central sun. It never loses its consciousness or light through eternity, and for ever it revolves round the central light, and is sharing in its functions, perceptions and blessedness, and that is a much better system than your negative system." So with all its imperfections, Çaivism still reigns in the south, and Buddhism has ceased to do so. (Applause.)

REV. KENNETH S. MACDONALD, D.D.—May I, as a missionary, and one who has given a great deal of thought to the subject, say a few words? I have been to Patna, and other places, with the special object of studying Buddhism. I entered on the study with a strong prejudice in favour of Buddha, principally arising from what I had read of Buddha, written by Europeans and Americans, and I followed Buddhism, as recorded in the books which profess to give us his life, with intense interest.

With regard to the paper that we have just had the privilege of hearing. First of all permit me to say that I concur heartily with the words of praise which the Chairman and the last speaker have uttered in regard to it, and I believe it to be well worthy of a hearty vote of thanks from us all. I have met people who seem to be afraid of being regarded as speaking hardly of Buddha and Buddhism. I do not think we should be afraid to speak out the truth openly with regard to it, and to stand to our guns, as far as the original writings bear us out in reference to that opinion. Praise is given to Buddha as to right conduct and moral conduct, the condemnation of sin and the approbation of virtue. To find the value of this you require first of all to ascertain what is right conduct in Buddha's point of view? What is sin from his point

of view? What is virtue from his point of view? Now, if we enter into these points, we find that his sin is very often no sin to us, his virtue is no virtue to us and his right conduct would be wrong conduct to us. One of the very first propositions he lays down as to right conduct would bring the human race to extinction in one generation, and so with regard to other points.

Now, with regard to Buddha's teaching, the starting point, as I understand it, is to be found in the Upanishads. Buddha believed that the world was as bad as it could possibly be, that suffering was the predominant feature of the world and the universe, and that the great thing that man had to do was to find out a way by which suffering could be destroyed; and when he discovered, as he believed he did discover, the right way by which this could be accomplished, he held that suffering was the result of desire, of action and of ignorance; but the starting point is, really, suffering, and if we care to know that these—desire, action, and ignorance—are the cause of suffering, then we start in the right way for the destruction of suffering: and undoubtedly he made one of the great points of his argument, that existence, in any form whatever, is the cause of suffering, just as he did desire, action and ignorance.

There is another matter I will say a word on, and that is with regard to the literature referred to on the last page but two of the paper.

“Many of the legends of Buddha's life have entered the Buddhist accounts we know not how or when. We can only trace up to Buddha those methods on which he taught his band of ascetics after he himself had become an ascetic. He claims to have reached his conclusions himself. He certainly claims no divine power. The various legends of his divine birth; the adoration of Asita (of which there are several different versions); the temptation of Māra; the homage paid to him by various divine beings; his miracles; are entirely inconsistent with the real history of Buddha. They appear only, for the most part, in later books, some of them written probably hundreds of years after Buddha's death.”

I would say, not *some* of the books but *all* were written hundreds of years after the death of Buddha. There is not a single book that goes back to within 300 or 400 years of the death of Buddha. Then some of them as you will also see from another part of the lecture, were written as late as the 13th century of the Christian Era. I should have liked to have

seen more emphasis laid on the argument that the books from which points of resemblance between Christianity and Buddhism are obtained, are books which were written long after the establishment of Christianity and the dissemination of it throughout a great part of the world.\*

Both at home and abroad, I would like much more to be done than is done by Christians, in the matter of opposing Buddhistic teaching, and I think it would be very desirable that some attempt should be made to meet the Buddhistic literature which is being circulated so extensively here in London, not only in books and tracts but in the periodical literature that is being distributed. I may mention a little incident connected with the manner in which this Buddhism or Theosophy is taught in London. I was present a few weeks ago at a "service" conducted by a man who called himself a minister. A text from the *New Testament* was given out, and the first sentence of the sermon was to the effect that the Bible was the most interesting book in the world, provided you did not read it religiously, and his second or third sentence was to the effect that the Bible consisted of incidents of teachings and stories taken from all the sacred books of the world, and that led up to the statement that the words of the text were taken from an incident in the life of Buddha! Now, I know a little about Buddha and the writings on Buddhism, and I have never heard of any Buddhistic writings that could in any way give a plausible ground for the statement made by that man from the pulpit. So next day I wrote a respectfully phrased card to the gentleman and said I should be very much obliged to him if he would tell me where he got the incident in the life of Buddha, with regard to the statement he made from the pulpit, and he replied—"You will find it in the *Maha-Vagga*." Now, this is a big book, about as big as our Bible, and to say to a person, "this incident you have referred to is in the Bible," would be rather vague, "unless chapter and verse" were given. However, after searching in vain for the incident in question, I invited my correspondent to meet me at the British Museum: on the appointed day, he did so, and with the book in question—with which I had previously provided myself from the Museum's shelves—before me: I told him I had been unable to find the incident in it

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\* See *Transactions*, vol. xviii, *Buddhism and Christianity*.—Ed.

and would he help me. He hesitated, and then said, "Oh, it must have been in the *Bahavatghita*." I turned to that book—with which I had also provided myself—and said I had been equally unable to find the incident there, whereupon he said, "Well, I am sorry I cannot help you, it might have been taken from the Upanishads." Now this is the name given to a large number of the sacred books of the East! He then added that he must have taken it from a certain book which he named. I asked him if he would let me see it, whereon he told me it was in New York; and we parted. However, thinking over the matter, I wrote a respectful letter asking him if he could kindly give me a reference to the matter from the notes of his discourse. He replied that "It is not convenient for me to do so." (Sensation.)

A VISITOR.—May I ask if there is any reasonable doubt as to Buddha having really lived?

W. H. ROBINSON, Esq.—I believe there is no doubt about his having existed, but there is some doubt about the question whether he was a king's son, and the author of the paper seems to admit it is very much disputed. It is disproved, I think, by Dr. Oldenberg; who quotes certain ancient documents in existence nearer the time of the Buddha than the usually quoted legends, and referring to tribes and families near that to which he belonged. In these his father is referred to without the attribute of Rajah, while other small princes have it always carefully affixed to their names. In fact, it is proved that, in the literal sense of the word, he was not a king's son, although it is possible that afterwards it became a certain kind of custom to attribute to every religious teacher the quality of prince, and hence the Buddha came to be called by that title.

I quite agree with the author's strictures on Sir E. Arnold's book. It is unfortunate that the goodness of the author's style and construction are the only cause of the book's influence.

Buddha was a great man there is no doubt; and no doubt he did a great thing in emancipating the down-trodden people of his neighbourhood from their slavery to the Brahminical system. That is one great reason for the success of his teaching. He was furthermore an ascetic, and gave up the world and riches; but this was a very common thing in India, both before his days, during his days, after his days, and even to the present day, India is a land of asceticism. Men there will constantly give up

the world and its pleasures for the good of their fellow men, but we do not exalt them into the position of the "Saviour of the world," and say they are "In Earth and Heavens and Hells incomparable." We do not give them adulation of that kind, and apply language to them that men should rightly apply only to the object of their worship. (Hear, hear.) I say Sir Edwin Arnold's book is one of the most mischievous, and is chargeable with having given currency to the opinion among shallow, or uninformed thinkers, that the Buddha was at least as great a man as He whom Christians adore, and his religion in some respects preferable to Christianity. I acknowledge its talent. I only wish it were in my power to write as sweetly. I should think it was indeed a gift, and should try to use it. The danger of the book lies in the fact that the great bulk of the British public, who read it, cannot distinguish, and they have not the learning to distinguish, between the sweetness of the singer and the truth, or otherwise, whereof he sings.

There is one point that I should like to refer to, namely, in regard to the Upanishads. I do not think they were sacrificial at all, but were purely philosophical. The sacrificial portion of the old teaching of India is contained in the Vedas and in the Brahmanas.

PROFESSOR H. LANGHORNE ORCHARD, M.A., B.Sc.—We are indebted to Mr. Collins for leading us to discriminate between the teachings of the great Buddha himself and those of his followers. I am sure we shall all concur in what the last speaker has said in protesting with him against the title of "The Light of Asia," whether it calls itself poetry or any other form of composition; Buddha's title to be "the Light of Asia?" rests on a very poor basis. Buddha appears to have been a moral ascetic (as has been well pointed out), who sought after righteousness, but did not seek after God. Hence his conception of sin was simply as a means to avoid suffering, and his aim to remove sin was simply an aim to remove the cause or means of suffering. He had no true sense of sin as against God. It was offence against man, but not offence against God. The reason why sin was to be avoided was because it led to suffering. With regard to his conception of God, as far as he had any, it was that of unconscious force. There are, I think, seven principal reasons why Buddhism obtained such an influence over the human family. One, no doubt, was the personal

influence of Buddha himself, another was its non-exclusive claims. You may be a Buddhist and at the same time you may, if you like, be a Confucianist. Buddhism does not exclude other tenets. Another reason for its wide acceptance, no doubt, was that it professed to give an explanation or solution of the life mystery. It also professed to remove suffering. Besides those four reasons there are, I think, three other principal reasons why Buddhism has had the influence it has. It appeals to the intuition of a future state of existence. It also appeals to the intuition of right and wrong, and in common with all other false systems of religion, it recognises the intellectual intuition of a God as existing, *i.e.*, it admits the existence of some being higher and greater than man; but, while doing so, it is careful to avoid the practical responsibility which is logically connected with the belief in the existence of God. It is a counterfeit system. It is, like all counterfeits, an imitation of the truth. Every deceit is a counterfeit of some truth. Every false religion is a counterfeit of the true religion, the planner and worker of these counterfeits being Satan, the great enemy of God and man. Buddhism has its attractive features. Likening itself to an angel of light, or a minister of righteousness, it comes forward and promises freedom from the tyranny of the baser passions. How is this to be effected? It is to be effected not by the subjugation of the lower desires, but by their extinction; and not only their extinction, but the extinction of all other desires as well, even the desire of life and of thought itself. We may well ask what is left when this is done? A man is to be deprived of all that which makes him a man. That is the idea. It aims or professes to aim at purification, and how is this purification to be effected? The purification is to be effected by man himself; there is no Almighty Helper to him in his struggles and conflicts against evil. Buddhism, resting on no logical basis, fails to justify itself, as a philosophy. Buddha precludes reasoning; he admits that his system will not stand the test of logical analysis. And, failing to respond to the intuitions of the conscience, Buddhism fails to justify itself as a religion.

Mr. ROBERT SCOTT MONCRIEFF (a visitor).—If I might add a few words at this late hour, I would say that having read *The Light of Asia* very soon after it was published, I said, “how can that be Light which has produced darkness of the grossest kind?” I had been in Burmah. I spent a year there, and I knew something

of the country and the religion of the people. I had not been in China, but I had read something of the Buddhism there, and in Ceylon, and my experience and knowledge of it led me to perceive nothing in it but darkness of the grossest kind, and I thought it gross presumption on the part of any man to put forward as *The Light of Asia* that which has added to the darkness of that great country. I thought to myself, here is a false prophet. He may charm ever so wisely; but he is a false prophet, and it is to the charm of such poetry that we owe so much of this wretched Buddhism in this country. I thought if people who praise it up here spent six months in Burmah and saw the practical evidence there of the fruits of that religion, they would never for a moment entertain the nonsense they now do about this Buddhism. Sirs and ladies, I venture to ask you if any people on the face of the earth seem to be more utterly indifferent to the shedding of blood and to human suffering than the followers of Buddhism. At the same time, with all this wretched, horrible disregard for human suffering and human life, they show the greatest care for animal life. Some will not even drink a glass of water for fear of the microbes it contains, or kill a flea, be it ever so troublesome. These contradictions are parts of the darkness proceeding out of *The Light of Asia*, which we are asked to accept in preference to *The Light of the World*. (Applause.)

The AUTHOR.—Really all I can do is to thank those who have kindly spoken.

I thank Dr. Pope very much for his interesting appendix to the paper. I wish I could have added a great deal more; but, of course, one can only go a very short way into such a subject in a paper, and my paper is very long as it is.

I think it is true that Buddhism was driven out of India by argument, in point of fact by the common sense of the people; and it is very interesting to know that at that time Buddhists were accused of not believing in the soul; but I cannot think that that was the doctrine of Buddha himself. It may have been so, and that is a very important matter, perhaps, for investigation. The later doctrines of the Buddhist books, are claimed as being introduced into the world by Buddha himself, of whom we are told he became the great Saviour of mankind by teaching these things! They may not all, however, have been in the original teachings of Buddha himself, but may have grown up in the development of

what we call Buddhism, under various Buddhist teachers, and we find, in point of fact, that almost every book of Hindoo philosophy has entered more or less into questions discussed also by Buddhists; and that what people look upon as Buddhism now is simply a phase of Hindoo philosophy.

With regard to the Upanishads, to which reference has been made, there is certainly in them constant reference to the sacrificial system.

The AUTHOR.—continuing—In one, for instance, there is an account of a young Brahmin, who comes to his instructor; and he is instructed in various matters connected with sacrifices. Of course the great subject of the Upanishads is as to the existence of the universal spirit, and its influence in the world under the most remarkable and often beautiful illustrations; but I do not see anything there, that can be taken as the origin of Buddhism. I think those who have expressed their appreciation of the paper. (Applause)

The Meeting was then adjourned.

## REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING PAPER.

Colonel CONDER, R.E., D.C.L., writes :—

The Rev. R. Collins has sought to refute some of the popular illusions regarding Buddha and Buddhism, which prevail in England at the present time, including: first, the belief that a third of the population of the world follows Buddha; secondly, that the legendary story of Buddha, found in the Lalita Vistara, is ancient and authentic; and thirdly, that the ignorant impostors who have adopted the term "Esoteric Buddhism," to delude the unwary, are authorities on Buddhism. Those who wish to know what is really thought by scholars will turn to the works of Rhys-Davids, Beal, and the numerous Pali and Sanskrit scholars who have contributed to Max Müller's library of "Sacred Books of the East."

If Buddhism can be said to be a religion at all, it is practically a dead one. Nothing would have astonished or disgusted the founder more than to find himself adored as a God, and his simple teaching converted into an ecclesiastical ritual of the most superstitious character. Neither in China, nor in India, nor in Thibet, does the spirit of Buddha influence so called Buddhists. What has received the name of Buddhism is merely the survival of that Paganism which Buddha failed to subvert. Even among the southern Buddhists of Ceylon and Burmah the number of real followers of Buddha's own teaching is probably very small.

The date of Buddha's birth and death is still a controversial question. He has been even placed as late as the time of Alexander the Great. The first authentic documents are the monumental decrees of Asoka, in the third century B.C., which speak of the *Dhamma* or sacred "law," of the *Sangha* or Buddhist "society," and of the *Bhikkus* or disciples." From the twelfth Edict it seems that many sects were equally tolerated by Asoka, and in the seventh we read :

"King Piyadasi, beloved of the gods, desires that all the sects should dwell at liberty in all places. They all indeed seek equally after submission and purity of heart, though the people are fickle in their aims, and fickle in their attachments."

The spread of Buddhism followed Alexander's march to India and Asoka himself was half a Greek, and mentions Antiochus Theos, Ptolemy II., Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander II. of Epirus, in his Edicts. It is difficult apparently to trace any Indian philosophy earlier than Alexander's times, and still a moot point whether Greece was more influenced by India in thought or India by Greece; but the presence of a civilisation which did not regard caste, in Bactria and Persia, certainly gave a great impetus to the Buddhist missionary movement, and the Bhikkus soon appeared in Persia, in Central Asia, and in China. From a passage in Josephus (*contra Apion* I, 22) it would seem that they even reached Northern Syria before the Christian Era.

But Buddha was concerned neither with religion nor with philosophy. The strength of his influence lay in his great compassion for the troubles of his fellow men. What he conceived to be the remedy was a "self control," which should put an end to ambition, avarice, and war. Prof. Rhys Davids (*Buddhism*, p. 88) sums up his teaching in the following extract:—"Try to get

as near wisdom and goodness as you can in this life. Trouble not yourselves about the gods. Disturb not yourselves by curiosities or desires as to a future existence. Seek only after the fruit of the noble path of self-culture and self-control."

In reading Buddhist works it seems to me that what Buddha meant by *Nirvana* was endless peace, and final rest after the troubles of the world; but later writers gave so many different explanations that almost any theory can be supported, by selecting certain passages from the enormous literature of the Buddhists.

As regards a few of the details of the paper, I would beg to note that writing is believed to have reached India about 600 B.C. The northern alphabets were derived from the Aramean scripts of Persia, the southern from the Arab characters of Yemen. In Asoka's time the Greek alphabet had also appeared on the coins of the Greek princes of Bactria.

The suggestion of Jewish influence in India in Buddha's time seems to me very improbable. The Jews were then captives, and only a small part of the Bible existed, in the form of scattered manuscripts, known only to the few, and not yet collected by Ezra. The Pentateuch was not translated into Greek till Asoka's time, and the same Ptolemy who caused this translation, is said by Eusebius to have collected Buddhist works as well. Between India and the Jews lay Persia, where the Zoroastrian creed was flourishing; and there is no trace of Jewish influence in the earlier books of the Zendavesta. If the Jews were unable to influence their Persian masters, it is hardly probable that they would have influenced the civilised states beyond. They were still a small subject people in Asoka's time, and it was not till the days of the Hasmoneans that they began powerfully to affect the thought of Western Asia.

As regards the Buddhist legends their importance would be much greater if they were peculiar to Buddhism. But this is not the case. Stories similar to some of them are found all over Asia, and which appear to be much older than Buddha. They occur in the mythology of the Turks, the Mongols, and the Chinese, as well as of the Persians and Hindus. Buddhism was not altogether unknown to the fathers of the Church—to Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, and others. (*Stromata* III, 7. *Contra Jovianum Epist.*), and Jerome knew the story of the Virgin birth of the Buddha. But I believe these coincidences between Buddhist and

Christian legends are found, not in the four Gospels, but in the Apocryphal Gospels of the fifth and sixth centuries, A.D. It can hardly be doubted in these cases that the explanation is found in the strong Manichean influence, prevailing in Syria when the apocryphal works were written. Manes claimed to be a Buddha (as we learn from Epiphanius and Cyril of Jerusalem), and incorporated many Hindu beliefs into his system, such as reincarnation and metempsychosis.

Rev. A. B. HUTCHINSON, M.A. (of Japan), writes:—

The title given by Sir E. Arnold to his brilliant but delusive poem *The Light of Asia*, suggests the reflection concerning the countries in which Buddhism prevails—"If the *Light* which is in thee be darkness, how *great* is that *darkness*." Moral precepts it has given to both China and Japan, but these have been for the most part empty words. Immorality on the part of the teachers has nullified their ethical utterances. In the absence of any recognition of the Creator and Preserver of the Universe there has been lacking a stimulus to good. Ignorant of God's righteousness a fictitious standard of good has been set up, and all sense of sin eliminated from the mind of the people. Good is in action rather than motive.

The paper opens a question of great interest, viz., the source of deliverance from ill taught by Sakya. It seems very probable that the precepts of Confucius, or rather those which the Chinese sage formulated from the ancient records of China, may have reached India and exercised a great influence over Sakya. The Doctrine of the Mean directly advocates the rectification of the heart as the first preliminary to reformation of life individual and social. Both in Confucianism and Buddhism there is the same fatal halting and silence when confronted by the question whence the power to do this thing? It is noticeable also that both in China and Japan, Nirvāna is practically unknown to the mass of people. A very material hell and heaven are looked for by these, and paradise to be ultimately reached is the goal of their desires. Man is in both countries supposed to have within himself the power requisite to self correction if he will but use it. The Rev. S. Beal some twelve years since pointed out to me that the miracles attributed to Buddha date from quite the

second century (*circa* A.D. 230) and he considered that the evidence showed them to be parodies of those recorded in the gospels. The motive for adopting them was presumably the necessity of withstanding the spread of Christianity in India. The popular Buddhism of Japan is as dissimilar to the original system as some aspects of Christianity in the present day are to primitive Christianity: so that the millions of either country may be said, in a sense, to live and die professing to hold the tenets either of Gautama or Christ. But a reversal to the original teaching of Christ undoubtedly results in Light—the Light of life, whilst a return to primitive Buddhism would be but a plunge into darkness a few degrees less obscure than total eclipse.

Professor LEGGE, D.D., (of Oxford), writes:—

I am sorry that I shall not be able to be present at the Meeting of the Victoria Institute to-night, and hear Mr. Collins's excellent paper on "Buddhism" and "the Light of Asia," which is to be read at it. I can only now seize a few minutes to express my agreement with Mr. Collins's judgments.

Of the literary and poetical merits of Sir Edwin Arnold's work it is not necessary to speak; and I would be far from denying the value and beauty of much of the teaching of Buddhism on human duty, and the course of life which man ought to pursue. The benevolence which it inculcates is also very attractive, and its spirit of generous self-sacrifice commands my highest admiration. At the same time, the exhibition of the virtues of kindness is often so grotesque that it does not fail to awaken a wondering astonishment in the beholder, and pity for the folly of the exhibitors. With such a feeling it was that I used to turn away from looking at the swine in the Honan Joss-house, opposite Canton; over-fed and over-grown, wallowing helplessly in their own filth, and at the over-crowded fish-pond on the top of Drum hill near Fu-chân.

As ridiculous are many of the stories of the self-sacrifice of Buddha himself, which were current as early as the time of Fahsien, in our fourth century, such as his saving a dove from the pursuing hawk by slicing a piece out of his own body, and throwing it to the latter, or his giving himself to be eaten by a starving tigress to make milk to feed her cubs.

Take the three principal doctrines of the Buddhistic system,—that of life as a condition of misery, of transmigration or the transrotation of births, and of *Nirvāna*, as deliverance from that transmigration, with no promise of an endless existence in conscious purity and happiness. I do not understand how a healthy, honest mind can see in it anything to be desired, and for which (not to introduce the subject of Christianity) the old religion of China, which is generally denominated Confucianism, should be forsaken.

Mr. Collins does not entirely accept the excessive estimate of the numbers of Buddhists as compared with that of the other principal religions of the world. Why should we, without authoritative statistics on the point, be ready to hand over to this system the largest percentage of mankind? I shall be surprised if it be proved that Buddhism has one hundred million followers. Sir Edwin Arnold, as quoted by Mr. Collins, estimates them at four hundred and seventy millions; seventy millions would, I think, be a nearer estimate.

Again, the influence of the system as a civilizer and elevator of man's social condition has been greatly over-rated. In illustration of this assertion let me quote part of an account given in the *Daily News*, of "a journey across Thibet," by Captain Bower, at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in 1893:—"As seen in Thibetan countries, the Buddhist religion has nothing in common with the pure morality preached by Gautama Buddha. The doctrines of the founder are too abstract, he thinks, for the average Thibetan mind, and this has led to innovations which have developed until the grossest superstition, little better than African fetichism, and hardly bearing any resemblance to the original precepts, is all one meets with in this stronghold of Buddhism. The nomads were described as greedy, faithless, and suspicious. Their suspicions, however, do not attach only to foreigners, as every camp seems to view every other camp as not only a possible, but a very probable enemy."

For the moral and social state of the Mongols, I need only refer to that most interesting volume by the late Rev. James Gilmour,—his *Life among the Mongols*.

On the follies of what is called "Esoteric Buddhism," Mr. Collins's paper is explicit enough.

Professor SIMON, D.D., writes :—

So far as I have enquired into the meaning of Nirvāna, I am inclined to think that the best definition is a very paradoxical one given me by a very intelligent Christian Japanese—"Life that is not life; and death that is not death." In fact, it is the Eastern, the Indian, equivalent to the doctrine taught by some of the Christian mystics, men like Eckhart. The two differ of course, because the antecedents and surroundings of the men differed; but the thing groped and felt after was probably in both cases identical, or as nearly so as might be.

S. W. SUTTON, Esq., M.D., India, writes :—

I should like to send a few MS. comments on Mr. Collins' paper, chiefly for the sake of seeking information. Buddhism is a subject that I know very little about. As a missionary to an essentially Mahometan country, I rarely come in contact with it; indeed I do not know that I have ever seen an Asiatic Buddhist, though occasionally I have come across a stray one amongst my own countrymen.

1. "The question of external influences bearing on Buddha's teaching" is briefly alluded to by Mr. Collins on p. 169, &c., and it is a very important and interesting question.

2. It is difficult for an outsider like myself to arrive at a solution of the question. What does Buddhism teach about the existence or non-existence of the soul? Mr. Collins's observations seem to show conclusively that the Buddha himself did believe in the soul's existence. Professor Kellogg (in *The Light of Asia and the Light of the World*, pp. 187 seq.) seems equally convincing in the opposite direction. It also appears that on this question Professor Max Müller agrees with Mr. Collins, and that Mr. Rhys Davids agrees with Professor Kellogg! Here we have, it seems, a battle of the giants. But then I notice that Mr. Collins bases his opinion on the Mahāvagga of the Vinaya Pitaka; while Professor Kellogg bases his opinion on the Sutta Pitaka; and so the question necessarily arises, Is this really a battle of the giants, a disagreement between the Professors? or, is it a contradiction in the Buddhist writings? If it is a contradiction in the Buddhist writings, then we begin to get an idea as to how far Buddhism is entitled to be considered the Light of Asia.

3. But whether Buddhism does or does not contradict this particular human instinct of the soul's existence, it does deny another instinct of humanity, namely the existence of God. Buddhism knows no God. And what follows thence?

i. Without a God there can be no revelation. How much light has Asia received from this doctrine of no God and no revelation? Contrast with this the flood of light that comes from such a passage (to quote one only) as this: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son . . . Who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." R. v.

ii. Without a God there can be no Inspiration. Even if the accepted teachings of the Buddha could be traced back to their reputed author with the same certainty that the books of the New Testament can be traced to their reputed authors, still the fact remains that the teaching is entirely human. There is nothing in it like to John xiv, 26; 2 Tim. iii, 16; 2 Pet. i, 21. With no Revelation and no Inspiration, how much light does Asia receive from Buddhism?

iii. With no God, it follows that there can be no law, and therefore no lawlessness, no sin. The Buddhist writings (I suppose) could give us nothing like that fundamental doctrine expressed so pithily by St. John; ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία: "sin is lawlessness."

iv. With no God, man is not held responsible to any supreme authority. Hence it follows that the basis of the ethics of Buddhism is not a distinction between right and wrong, but one between the advisable and the unadvisable. Whatever there may be in the place of law, it could not be called a law of righteousness, but only a law of expediency.

v. Lastly, as Mr. Collins points out on p. 167, see *ante*, without God "there is no acknowledgment of a power above man's." However noble may be the moral tenets of a religion (though I would not call Buddhism a religion) these tenets cannot be of any real practical use without some accompanying power, outside of and above man. This indeed was the very reason why St. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for he knew it to be "the power of God unto Salvation," Rom. i, 16.

## THE AUTHOR'S FURTHER REPLY.

October 12, 1895.

With regard to the very interesting question as to the influence of Early Buddhist Missionaries in Northern Syria before the Christian era, I should have been thankful if Colonel Conder had quoted the exact passage in *Josephus*, to which he refers. I am not aware of any mention in *Josephus* of Buddhist Missionaries. There is no word to connect the tenets, there alluded to, of either Pharisees, Sadducees, or Essenes, with Buddhist teaching. Nor in Contra Apion I, is there any evidence that the "*Kalani*," mentioned by Aristotle, were Buddhists. I have, however, touched upon this part of the subject in a former paper.

I can hardly see that the quotation from Professor Rhys Davids—"Disturb not yourselves by curiosities or desires as to a future existence"—represents the true character of Buddha's teaching. His one aim, as expressed in very numerous reports of his sayings, was to escape the endless *future* series of transmigrations of the soul then believed in; and the great end of his teaching was, that his devotees should enter Nirvāna after death; Nirvāna not being a word of his own coining, but a Hindu expression already applied to a future state of existence. I should rather have concluded from the often repeated sayings of Buddha, as reported by his disciples, that his teaching was—"Do everything with an eye to the Future."

The question of possible Jewish influence Southwards 600 years B.C. is, perhaps, not a very vital one. But was it not quite as possible for there to have been a Hebrew influence Southwards, as for there to have been a Buddhist influence Northwards? Babylon was, no doubt, directly in communication with India at that time through her merchants.

In reference to remarks by the Rev. A. B. Hutchinson, Professor Legge, and Dr. Sutton, I may add, that the moral precepts of Buddha do not seem to have secured any high state of morality in the Buddhist Priests of Ceylon, unless they are greatly belied by the testimony of their own countrymen. Practically the

Buddhism of to-day in Ceylon consists of an ignorant adoration of a legendary Buddha, and a recourse to the devil-worship and sorcery that pervade nearly the whole of India. The hope of Nirvāna has vanished long since, it being regarded as something utterly unattainable in the present age. The future looked for is simply re-birth, the nature of which is supposed to be determined by the merit or demerit of the past.

There is not the least evidence, that there was ever any esoteric, as contrasted with exoteric, system of doctrines in Buddhism. It is, perhaps, worth noting, that even Madame Blavatsky herself, in her *Secret Doctrine*, denies that Mr. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* is a proper representation of the actual teaching of Buddha. "Esoteric Buddhism" is the offspring of modern European brains. It is also certainly the fact, that many of the European discussions on ancient Buddhism and Hinduism have originated among the youth of India and Ceylon a class of ideas on religious questions that, thirty or forty years ago, the most deeply read Pundits never dreamt of.